



Ottawa Walking School Bus Program Information for Parents APRIL 2016

Q. What is a Walking School Bus (WSB)?

- A. A Walking School Bus (WSB) is simply a group of children who walk to school together under adult supervision following a specific route and schedule.

Q. Why should my child participate?

- A. Because a WSB is a safe, convenient, healthy and fun way for your child to travel to school with their friends. It offers them fresh air and exercise before the bell rings which in turn will help them be more alert in class, less stressed, and develop a life-long healthy habit.

Q. Who is running this program?

- A. Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA), www.ottawaschoolbus.ca

With our partners:

- Health Kids Community Challenge Ottawa, www.parentinginottawa.com/healthykidschallenge
- Ottawa Public Health, <http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/public-health>
- Ottawa Safety Council, www.ottawasafetycouncil.ca
- Green Communities Canada (Active & Safe Routes to School Program), www.saferoutestoschool.ca

Q. Which schools are participating.

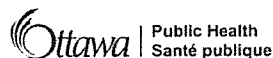
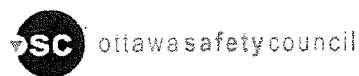
- A. Queen Mary Street Public School, Queen Elizabeth Public School, R.E. Wilson and Devonshire Community Public School.

Q. Is it safe?

- A. Each WSB will be led by an adult Leader who is responsible for a maximum of 10 students. This Leader is employed by the Ottawa Safety Council and meets the same training and other requirements as an Adult Crossing Guard. Liability insurance coverage is provided by the Safety Council. Routes use the road, sidewalk and winter-maintained pathway networks in OSTA's database and will respect OSTA's rules about walking hazards.

Q. When will the WSB operate?

- A. Every regular school day between September and June. It will operate in the morning only, ie. for the journey *to school*. There will be one WSB per school.



Q. What route will the WSB follow?

A. The route at your school has been established by OSTA in consultation with the other partners. Total travel time from the start of the route to school is no more than 30 minutes and the WSB will arrive at no later than 5 minutes before the bell. A map of the route at your school is available here:
<http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb>

Q. Who can join the WSB?

A. Any student attending one of the participating schools who wants to walk the established WSB route is welcome. Students using mobility aids may also join, however a barrier-free route cannot be guaranteed. For children with life-threatening medical conditions, leaders will only be able to provide basic first aid care in an emergency.

Q. How do I register my child?

A. Go to <http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb> and follow the instructions. Please note:

- Completing the application online does not guarantee a space for your child. A signed copy of the registration form must also be submitted to your school.
- Space is limited and assigned on a first come, first served basis. When the first 10 spaces on your route have been filled, a waiting list will be created.

Q. Where and when will my child meet the WSB?

A. Stops and times are indicated on the WSB route map for your school available here:
<http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/wsb> . Your child can join at the stop closest to your home or anywhere along the route. Please arrive a few minutes before the scheduled time. The WSB will not wait for late arrivals and door-to-door or other special stops will not be offered.

Q. What if we miss the WSB?

A. As the parent/caregiver you are still responsible for ensuring your child gets to school on time.

Q. Can my child bring their bike, scooter, roller blades etc?

A. No.

Q. Can I or another caregiver walk with the group?

A. Yes. However the WSB Leader will be the adult in charge of the group at all times and you will be asked to respect their authority.

Q. What happens during bad weather?

A. In general the WSB will operate in all weather conditions including days when the yellow school buses are cancelled. However, in the case of freezing rain or other extreme weather events (as determined by the Ottawa Safety Council) it may be cancelled. Parents/caregivers will be notified no later than 30 minutes before their WSB is scheduled to start.

Q. How do I withdraw my child from the WSB?

A. You must notify OSTA by email (businfo@ottawaschoolbus.ca) or phone (613.224.8800 ext. 2572)